**Interim Mission Report – January/Mar 2025 Mission Trip**

**Roland and Faylene Beard at Hallel Integrated Ministries, Iloilo, Philippines**

February 18 is the halfway point for this mission trip to the Philippines and Thailand. We have spent the first half in the Iloilo region with our host, Hallel Integrated Ministries, located about 2 hours north of Iloilo City, Panay Island, Philippines. The director, Rev. Pat Capwell, made a cottage available to us as our home for a month. Her hospitality is as noteworthy as her desire to see young people come to Christ.

During our time in Iloilo we have conducted two biblical creation seminars to approximately 40 pastors and 60 church members. The third edition of our resource (*A Study of God’s Creation Filled with Purpose, Direction, and Consequence*) was given to church leaders. The contents were reviewed with presentations, exercises, and discussions. The second of these seminars was with the Bethlehem Church, whose pastor is the founder of a network of churches. Pastor Raymond has already requested a return visit in 2026 to reach many other churches in the region. Both seminars also involved preaching to local church congregations on Sundays.

Another two-day seminar at Hallel was conducted on observing the heavens, using our *Astronomical Observing from a Biblical View (AOBV)* as the baseline for instruction. It was attended by 15 local teachers, a couple of pastors, and teachers from a Christian school in Iloilo City. A practice observing event and exercises were included. Both Hallel and a Christian school in Iloilo City stated intentions to set up programs for observing the created heavens.

Three staff members from Hallel are being trained using AOBV so they can be certified to use telescope equipment, find bright objects, and record what they see. The more general aim is to train them to hold sky exhibitions and certify other teachers to do the same thing. We have had multiple meetings and observing events, which will continue after we leave. The three trainees will be sending observing sheets to Faylene, who will oversee their progress toward certification.

Because the Hallel director wants an observing capability as part of Hallel functions for guests, she ordered an observing area to be built with my guidance. It is now in operation. Night sky conditions in Hallel are very good since they are in a rural area with few lights.

I used this visit to check astronomy equipment and resources. Two small telescopes are now in use. Ancillary resources that are used for exhibitions are organized and ready for Hallel staff to use. In 2026 I will review equipment again and make any adjustments that are needed. The three trainees are taking on the responsibilities of maintaining what they have. They may start exhibitions of the heavens for visitors in a few months.

The Director of Hallel asked for us to share with the staff on two occasions. We also met with the director several times during our stay. These were all good occasions for fellowship. We also had fellowship with some of the college students that Hallel is sponsoring. One night per month the local youth that are on a Hallel scholarship in the local schools or at Northern Iloilo State University get together. We were asked to share with them for their February meeting.

Work has not stopped for upcoming events for this mission trip. Coordination for events in Laguna, Cavite, and Thailand have continued. We fly to Manila within a week to the next set of events at the Institute of Foundational Learning.

On a personal note, we have renewed our fellowship with many friends at Hallel and are impressed with the progress that has been made at the ministry site. New cottages have been constructed. Gardens are producing vegetables that they eat and will eventually be able to sell. Beautifying the land and finishing the cottages for guests is ongoing. The director continues to encourage local needy children by helping with expenses for their schooling. Support from island believers has helped all these things progress. The director continues to encourage local pastors to work together. A community of functioning believers is emerging. The aim is the same as ours – see people encouraged as they walk as Christians.

Thanks for reading. The next report will be published in late March.

Roland Beard